

OBEY ANNOUNCES HOUSE PASSAGE OF RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY AND SENATOR GAYLORD NELSON

WASHINGTON, DC – Today the House of Representatives passed a bipartisan resolution commemorating the 40th anniversary of Earth Day and honoring the founder of Earth Day, the late Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin. Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) introduced the resolution last month with 56 cosponsors, including the entire Wisconsin delegation. The measure had over 70 cosponsors when it passed the House Floor today. Senators Kohl and Feingold introduced a companion resolution in the Senate.

“I’m very pleased the House passed this resolution,” Obey said. “The 40th anniversary of Earth Day is a great day to call attention to the many environmental and public health challenges that face everyone on the planet. It is also a great opportunity to reflect on the history of the Earth Day movement and to pay tribute to one of recent history’s great statesmen and founding father of the movement, our former Senator from Wisconsin, Gaylord Nelson.”

“Earth Day was born in 1970 out of the passion of Gaylord Nelson. On this day, we remember one of our most prominent Wisconsinites and celebrate his lifelong commitment to service. On this 40th anniversary of Earth Day, we must honor his legacy by turning words into action. We can work to achieve policies that reduce our dependence on foreign oil, cut greenhouse gas emissions, lower prices at the pump and on the electricity bill, and create good-paying jobs that cannot be outsourced,” Kohl said.

“Earth Day has always had a special meaning for Wisconsinites, both because of Gaylord

Nelson's tremendous leadership and because of our state's long tradition of conservation and respect for the environment. I am proud to help honor Gaylord Nelson's legacy and that Wisconsin tradition with this resolution. But with the environment continuing to face threats, such as climate change and the erosion of protections for our waters and our skies, we must continue Gaylord Nelson's fight. This resolution is both a commemoration of Earth Day and Gaylord Nelson's life work and a commitment to keep fighting for clean air and water," Feingold said.

Earth Day was "born" in September, 1969. In a speech, Senator Nelson suggested that, just as Americans had been involved in "teach-ins" to protest the Vietnam War, the country should also set aside a day to call attention to the environmental problems facing our planet and to demand that Congress address those pressing issues.

The first Earth Day, on April 22, 1970, brought together 20 million people and gave rise to the modern American environmental movement. Forty years later, as many as one billion people in 180 countries may participate in Earth Day 2010 on April 22nd.

In addition to founding Earth Day, and among numerous legislative accomplishments, Senator Gaylord Nelson was responsible for legislation that created the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and the St. Croix Wild and Scenic Riverway, and sponsored legislation to ban phosphates in household detergents.

Senate passage is imminent.

For additional information on Earth Day and Senator Nelson's role in its founding, please visit:
www.nelsonearthday.net

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